

Miraculous photographic apparition (slightly retouched) of The Servant of God, Charbel, May 8th, 1950 (i.e. fifty-one years after his death). The only known photo of Charbel.

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A MODERN FATHER OF THE DESERT

IN times of crisis the Church looks in a special way to those of her children who are practising the contemplative life. It is only by prayer and fasting that such devils, at large in a period of crisis, are cast out.

The main theme of this issue is a recent Maronite hermit who died fifty-one years ago and at whose tomb strange happenings and miracles are taking place at the present time.

Father Charbel was a monk of an Eastern rite that has been in many ways latinized—and traces of this will be manifest in the account of his life—yet there is no question but that the general mode of his life was according to the traditional monastic way of the East.

A Benedictine monk, who has lived in Palestine and the Lebanon for years, writes of Father Charbel's spirituality: 'there is nothing specially Eastern in the *Imitation*, so far as I know, but I think there were features in this and other Maronite hermits' spirituality which were characteristically Oriental'.

We give two accounts of Father Charbel. One from a young American Melkite priest who did his studies with the Missionaries of St Paul at Harissa. He has kindly procured the photograph's illustrating this number. The other is by a Maronite monk whose father, when a boy of thirteen, had served the hermit's Mass.

We preface these two accounts by a translation from the Syrian night Office. The Maronites use a recasting of the Syrian Office. This should help to give a setting to the *Life*.

In this issue we are reviewing the two Arabic books on Father Charbel, *La Vie Spirituelle* (April 1951), also has some account of the hermit.

THE EDITOR

A SONG ON THE ASCETIC LIFE

(SYRIAN NIGHT OFFICE)

Many times anhungered,
nature crying mercy,
I withheld and ate not
that (sweet) bliss to merit
5 which is kept for fasters.

RESPONSE :

Our commemoration,
Mar Ephrem, a blessing :
and thy prayer, may't be
as a wall for our souls.

Water, drinking water,
asked my earthly nature :
still I let it (parch 'nd) dry
that it go delighting
10 to the cool of Paradise.

Thus for its enticements—
thronged in every season,
in my youth, in old age—
one by one I filched the
15 days, until they ended.

Early I was thinking :
I will die by evening.
Like a man to die then,
constant, on I laboured
20 through the daylight hours.

Eventide my thought was :
Life no more to-morrow.
So until the dawning
gave I earnest service,
25 standing fast in prayer.

When my body asked me
sleep its needs (to quiet),
I cajoled it by that
bliss our Lord does give them
30 Keeping watchful vigil.

I have made myself a
church in Christ ('s own honour) ;
and therein I offered
odours and sweet incense,
35 th' labours of my members.

Mind (and wit) were altar :
will the minist'ring priest ;
for a spotless lamb, I
sacrificed my person—
40 thus made I the Off'ring.

Endless on watch I was
that no oil come near me ;
for I'd been anointed
long ago in baptism
45 with the Spirit's unction

Lest I wash in water
I was always trembling ;
for I'd bathed in waters
which came forth from Christ's
50 on the Cross depending. [side

When I was receiving
Sacrifice's Fire,
this then was my prayer :
that it burn the cockle,
55 briars in my members.

Brothers mine, the fire,
kindled in my members,
it was God's Blood (God's Blood),
that those flames extinguished
60 lest be burned my person ;

God's (own) Body, which I
in holy church received—
that preserved my person
from all harmful things and
65 from the one against me.

Evenings, signed I (myself,
that is,) all my members
in the (one) name threefold
that the Bad One come not
70 my virgin state to steal.

Glory unto Thee from
all, o threefold Power—
for my age Thou strengthened
in the mighty battle
75 through the length of seasons.

From my youth to old age,
Lord, Thy yoke I bore ; and
constant, on I laboured,
all the time rejoicing
80 till the final moment.

Hunger's suffering I
found, and it I conquered ;
for I saw how Thou didst
bitterness eat for me,
85 placed between two robbers.

A Song on the Ascetic Life

139

Thirst's pangs—they I reckoned
quite as though they were not ;
for I saw how Thou didst
drink upon the Cross for
90 me the acid winesop.

With the fasts and vigils
pale my visage grew, that
at the Resurrection
Thee, as prophet Moses,
95 shining I too might see.

Crucified I saw Thee,
naked on the gibbet—
sack cloth then for clothing.
I staid, hope set on Thee—
100 looking to Thy advent.

I rejected foods, and
wines—I did refuse them ;
since before my eyes I
set Thy kingdom's banquet,
105 O celestial Bridgroom.

* * *

The above chant is found near the end of the Syrian night office for the feast of Saint Ephrem (d. 373), sung the first Saturday of Lent, which is a feast of obligation, 28th January, 19th February and 18th June. 'Song' which the holy Mar Ephrem composed concerning his soul.' So reads the introductory rubric. Whatever may be said for the veracity of this attribution,² the whole piece breathes an atmosphere thoroughly Ephremitic and primitive. Because of its simplicity and warmth it never fails to make an appeal. But likewise because of its simplicity (a trait typically Syrian), the characteristic structure of the underlying asceticism is apt to pass unobserved. A brief analysis, then, of this short chant will serve to illustrate the richness of this evangelical spirituality.

The whole song divides itself into three sections according to the dominant motive alleged for maintaining the ascetic struggle. In these larger divisions there are minor distinctions manifest in the parallel structure of pairs and triplets of stanzas. It will be enough to note the dominant motives.

The first six Stanzas (1-30) form a unity ; for in them all the future joys of Paradise animate the present struggle of contest and expectancy. Combined with this is also the thought of imminent death (16-25). The chief corporal means of ascetic conquest are put forward—privation namely of food, drink and sleep. It is to be noted that joys of the

¹ *Sugitho* (song, chant) : it consists of five-line stanzas, five syllables to a line. In the version (made from the text printed in the office for St Ephrem, Sharfeh, 1923, p. 30), I have approximated this verse-scheme by employing a trimeter, mostly trochaic. The words in brackets I have added to complete the rhythm. The melody to which it is sung has this year been arranged for three voices ; the opening verses are sometimes repeated during the celebration of Mass. In this type of song, the response, always short, was originally intended to be sung by all the people, while the verses were rendered by a few cantors.

² St Ephrem's biographers (as Lamy, Ricciotti) make no reference to it. This is not surprising as it contains no information as to the events of his life. It would be interesting to know if the text were preserved elsewhere than in the liturgical codices.

soul are not alone presented as motives, but those of the body as well (line 9, cp. 91-5).

The motive underlying the following eight stanzas (31-70), might compendiously be stated as : the honouring of Christ in His Mysteries. Under the image of a church (which is, simply, a place of sacrifice) the author presents his mind, will and person as altar priest and victim. Then follow the Sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist.

This and the former section close with reference to his signing his members at night with the sign of the Cross (66-70).

A doxology and reiterated reference to his constant labours (71-80), serve to introduce the final section. Here the motive is no longer Christ in His Mysteries, but Christ suffering. The thought, however, does not remain fixed on the Passion and the concomitant corporal emaciation in the ascetic ; but turns rather to our glorious share in the Resurrection and the divine banquet at the consummation of Redemption. Thus, in a way, are fused the motives of the previous sections—the last things, Christ in His Mysteries, Christ suffering.

No one will question the scriptural inspiration of the first and last sections. As to the second, this inspiration is not so immediately manifest, for a certain ecclesiological and theological development clearly underlies the passage. But this too is thoroughly scriptural. If one may not so easily cite for it chapter and verse as for the apocalyptic motive, it is none the less equally enmeshed in the warp and woof of the New Testament dispensation.

Christ and His Church are the fulfilment of the Old Testament figures, a fulfilment bringing the reality, yet not its consummation. The present dispensation, then, an interim dispensation, has at once the character of fulfilment of the Old Testament and of figures of the final consummation when Christ will render all to the Father that He may be all in all. The symbolism¹ then involved in the Church and the Sacra-

¹ For this constant commerce which we have with types that make present the represented reality and yet prefigure the same reality's perfect consummation in heaven, the term *sacramental* may be used. But its use is open to misunderstanding ; as being the adjectival form of *Sacrament*, it is indistinguishable from *sacramental* signifying certain blessed objects as holy water and the like. In addition both *sacrament* and *sacramental* have restricted technical senses which are difficult to shake off. Sometimes the word *mystic* is used for this same commerce of type and fulfilment ; but here again the word has practically lost this sense in favour of one which relates it to the Mystics and to prayer. In the text I have referred to the second motive as Christ in His Mysteries, implying this same range of meaning, this same commerce, this could be condensed in adjectival form into the word *mysteric*, accent on the penultimate.

ments is as fundamentally evangelical as the motive which rests on a Dominical saying: Watch for ye know not the hour.¹

Aphraat, a contemporary of St Ephrem but living in the Persian Empire, concludes his *Demonstrations* with a statement equally applicable to the author of our song: 'I in my littleness have written these things, a man born of Adam, formed by God's hands, a disciple of the Holy Scriptures!'²

Several lesser points might be mentioned. The ascetic life is traditionally conceived as hard work, *Labor, ponos*. In line 74 the Syriac uses the Greek word *agon*, which I have rendered battle. The context is one where the chief enemy is the Devil, another traditional point of ascetic doctrine (cp. 65, 69). It need hardly be mentioned that the reference to the Fire of Sacrifice in 52 is to the Eucharist, seen in the fiery coal taken from the heavenly altar and placed on Isaias' lips in his vision (chap. 6).

The last stanza of the second part might cause some questioning. Just what is meant when before repose the ascetic signs himself with the Cross *that the devil steal not his virginity*? At that time virginity in a man was reckoned also to have its physical basis; only he could be called virgin who had never, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, lost his seed. This is clear from a passage of St Ephrem in the thirty-fifth of his *Carmina Nisibena*. In this song Satan, Death and Sin are introduced in council of war just before the agony in the garden. The devil says:

Concupiscence of the body is in the bodies of all men. Even when they sleep it is alert in them. Whoever has kept himself pure while awake, I disturb by dreams; bodily impurities are roused in him by hidden movements in dreams. Sleepers and wakers alike I also stir up. This one alone (Jesus) keeps himself pure; for even in dreams I have not roused him, for even in sleep he is pure and holy.³

¹ The tendency, manifest in this section (31-70), to use as effective implements in the ascetic struggle the mystic symbolism of the Church and its ceremonies quite probably facilitated the spread of the Dionysiac corpus. The Syrians could very well have seen in this corpus, with its Alexandrian and Neo-Platonic development of symbolism, a certain development of their own traditions. See in this regard De Vries, *Sakramententheologie bei den Syrischen Monophysiten* (Orientalia Christiana Analecta 125), Rome 1940, p. 332.

² *Aphraatis Demonstratio* XXII, 26, *Patrologia Syriaca* 1, 1049, 1-4 (ed. Parisot).

³ *Carmina Nisibena* (ed. Bickell), 35, 119-131.

The spirituality, then, reflected in this short song is based on the Scriptures and the realities of Church life. It is an asceticism which places all reward and consolation in the life to come; here there is only strife, hardship and expectancy.¹ Moreover there does not appear any overt sign of the enjoyment of the higher states of prayer, of mysticism, as is sometimes evident in Aphraat.²

The passing of this ancient spirituality may be placed at the beginning of the sixth century. Father Hausherr remarks of Philoxenus of Mabbug (d. 523)³ that he found himself at 'the crossroads where the ancient spirituality of Aphraat and St Ephrem, which followed the gospel tradition alone, met up with philosophy' through Evagrius of Pontus, chiefly. The difference between the two spiritualities is aptly manifest in the etymology, though it be false, which Denys the Mystic, roughly contemporaneous with Philoxenus, gives to the word *monachos*.⁴ Monks, he says, are so named because by their pure service and holy life they are brought to union with the *Monas* (that is, with the one God) and to perfection. The ascetic life is here conceived as preparation for union with God already in this life; the older concept left perfection and reward to the next world. The older is certainly scriptural; the latter likewise; yet this development, affecting all subsequent spirituality, has been occasioned by the impact of Hellenistic thought, represented primarily in Evagrius and Denys.

Sharfeh, near Beirut, 1948

DOM POLYCARP SHERWOOD

¹ Yet note line 79: *All the time rejoicing.*

² Op. cit., Dem. XXIV, 35.

³ *Rév. d'Ascétique et Mystique* 14 (1933), 175.

⁴ Migne, PG 3, 533A, *Eccl. Hier.* cap. VI, i, 3.

THE MODERN MARONITE SERVANT OF GOD, CHARBEL MAKHLOUF

1828-1898

THE pronunciation of the word 'Lebanon' easily stirs up the imagination of the listener. The scene of bronze Phoenician oarsmen rowing their serpent-like galleys to the rhythm of oriental intonations, through the blue Mediterranean, suggests itself to the spectacled historian and dreamy artist. The picture of hoary Hiram inspecting enormous rafts of red cedar to be shipped to Solomon introduces itself to the biblical scholar. Strong mountain strongholds, ancient centres of Catholicism in the Near East form the contour of the mental image of 'Lebanon' for the reader of the *EASTERN CHURCHES QUARTERLY*.

The Lebanon of 1950 is losing its antique finish; many tourists visiting its capital, Beirut, are disappointed. 'It's too modern', they say, the bazaars are transforming themselves into portable department stores, and the graceful *abaiyeh* is being quickly absorbed by the crowd wearing Parisian and London fashions.

In the ascetical domain, Lebanon now accepts the 'active-order' idea. Instead of chanting the Office all day long, monks prefer to sponsor catechetical and college activities. They all want to be missionaries!

In this 1950 fever of action, a rumour, a miracle, miracles, many miracles, crowds of pilgrims, mass-veneration, have all turned our minds back to the 'good old-fashioned' days of the Fathers. The keyword for many hearts, scattered throughout the world, was, and is: 'Charbel Makhlof'.

In 1828 Joseph Zaroun Makhlof was born in the village of Béka-Kafra (1600 metres above sea-level) near the venerable cedars of Lebanon. His father was a typical mule-driver, as one sees even to this day, singing and working on the picturesque plateaux of this Switzerland of the East. His father dying in 1831, Joseph was adopted and educated by his uncle Tarios. His uncle was astonished by his early piety, which manifested itself in long hours of prayer and solitude spent in one of the spongy rock caves nearby. In 1851 the call became too strong. Knowing the opposition of his uncle, the eighteen-year-old lad left home secretly and asked admission to the monastery of St Maro at Annaya, one of the houses of the Maronite Baladite Order. Despite his uncle's opposition,

Joseph was admitted to the community and started his novitiate. He took the name of Charbel—a martyr of the Church of Antioch during the second century. He pronounced his solemn vows in 1853, and on 23rd July 1859, he was ordained to the sacred priesthood, after having spent a period of study with the illustrious Father Alhardini.

Fr Charbel lived the life of a model monk during fifteen years at Annaya, singing the Office in choir and working in the vineyards and olive orchards. Even during the heat of the day's work he never thought of eating a single grape, and he abstained from all sweets, contenting himself with the leavings of his fellow-monks. His favourite pastime was spiritual reading, and particularly that of the *Imitation of Christ*.

In 1875 wishing to imitate the holy Fathers of the Desert, he became a hermit, occupying the nearby hermitage of SS. Peter and Paul. This hermitage had been built in 1812, in view of affording a shelter to those monks called to the eremitical life. It consisted of four tiny rooms (a cell for each monk) and a small chapel. The life of the hermit was extremely hard, involving perpetual abstinence from meat and tobacco, four periods of fasting in the year, and the recital of Office at midnight. Fr Charbel's bed was a sack stuffed with leaves, twigs and straw, laid on the floor and covered with a goat-skin: his pillow was a wooden slab wrapped in rags. He ate one meal a day, principally of vegetables, either cooked or raw and seasoned by a little oil. He always put himself under obedience to the other hermits, if there were any. His reputation grew, and many came to ask his advice, prayers and blessing. He was called a miracle-worker, and in some cases he merited the title. The monk Charbel lived thus for twenty-three years. After a brief paralysis, which Donald Attwater touchingly describes in his *Golden Book of Eastern Saints*, he died on Christmas Eve 1898, and was buried without a coffin in the common burial vault of the monastery, enveloped by the long, graceful folds of his black monastic *jibbi*. Sixty-eight years of heroic sacrifice were ended.

In writing a short biography of this holy priest, on the occasion of his death in the annals of the monastery, the hegumen lauded his angelic, superhuman obedience.

A few months after his death, because of the wonders worked by his intercession the hegumen Fr Anthony Mishmishani, future general of the Order, obtained the permission of His Beatitude Elias Houwaiyeh, the Maronite patriarch,



Our Lady of Lebanon



The Crowd of Pilgrims visiting the Tomb
of Fr Charbel, in the Lebanon



Pilgrim praying at his Tomb



June 29th, 1950—The Maronite Patriarch H. B. Anthony Arida celebrating the Liturgy at the Chapel of the Hermitage



His Beatitude Anthony Arida visiting the Cell—June 29th, 1950



Interior of the Hermitage—the Cell of Charbel

to transfer the body to a tomb separate from the common burial vault. The body was discovered in the same condition as it had been when buried, although water had recently flooded the vault. The body was placed in a coffin and venerated privately in one of the monastery chapels. An extraordinary phenomenon surprised everyone. The body perspired continually, and a bloody sweat accumulated about it. The monks would change his clothing, which remained still bloodstained, twice a week. This fact added to his reputation, and everyone in the locality sought his intercession. In 1926 his cause was introduced at Rome. In 1927 the body was examined by three specialists from Beirut, and was placed in a tomb between the walls of the convent, and marked with an inscription. Things remained quiet during the period between 1927 and 1950.

February 27th, 1950, witnessed a strange event. Certain passers-by informed the hegumen of the monastery of Annaya, Fr Peter Al-Ihmigi, that water was trickling from the tomb of Fr Charbel. The superior quickly examined the spot, and sure enough he found that a sticky liquid flowing from the wall was forming puddles before the tomb. Fearing that the tomb had been flooded by an underground spring, he assembled the monks and opened the tomb the same day. The body was found in the same condition as it had been in 1927, a bloody sweat flowed from it and was filling the cavity of the tomb little by little. The ecclesiastical authorities were at once informed of this mysterious happening, and His Beatitude Anthony Arida appointed a group of priests and doctors to examine the body. The tubes containing the written attestations of the events in 1927 and buried with the body were rusted, and the bottom of the coffin with its zinc layer had deteriorated. The liquid was stored in bottles and distributed to those asking for it. The committee of experts found the body still supple. The authorities finally decided to close the tomb and await advice from Rome.

The tomb was re-opened on 22nd April 1950, in the presence of Mar Paul Akel, auxiliary bishop to the patriarch, and Fr John Andari, superior-general of the Order, with a group of old monks who had known the servant of God and who had been present during the events of 1927. All of them attested that the coffin contained the real body of Fr Charbel, and that no substantial change had taken place as to the condition of the body since 1927. The bloody sweat continued to astonish everyone. Immediately crowds of pilgrims swarmed the monastery, and miracles, moral as

well as physical, multiplied. Moslems, Druses too, together with Christians came and sought his intercession, and some were cured. I myself witnessed two miracles: a recovery of sight and hearing, and an instantaneous healing of a crippled wrist. One man had not been inside a church for forty years; when he visited Annaya he confessed and received Holy Communion. The miracles recorded at Annaya have reached the 500 mark, which includes thirty-five Moslems and Druses.

Two books and several pictures have been printed by the Baladite Order, each with the authority of Rome and the patriarch. One of these pictures is the result of a miracle. On 8th May 1950, during an excursion of the Missionaries of Kraim to the site of Annaya, one of the brothers, an expert photographer, took several photographs of the monastery, including also a group of seminarians. When he returned to their college at Djoumeh he began to develop the film himself. He was amazed to find that in one of the photographs before the hermitage, including the group of seminarians, an old monk presented himself kneeling. He appeared transparent, although his silhouette was distinct from the rest of the picture. He sent the photograph with the negative to the superior-general of the Baladite Order, who, in turn, sent them to expert photographers in Beirut. Later it was shown to those who had known Charbel when alive; nine of them declared it to be that of the Servant of God, and among them was Eliseus Nakade, cousin of the hermit. This is the only photograph which the Baladite Order recognizes as authentic.

All this happened in 1950. No, the East is not stagnant! Obstinate she produces saints, and according to her traditional manner. Rome is particularly pleased by these happenings. On 4th August 1950, Mgr Tardini and Mgr Trafia, representatives from the Vatican, witnessed the third opening of the tomb; the bloody sweat continued, and the body was exposed for the veneration of the faithful, pilgrims and the sick, for several hours.

May God speed the Canonization of the Servant of God—so traditional, yet so modern—of Charbel Makhoul, a hieromonk of the Maronite rite.

Harissa, Lebanon, 19th February 1951

ALLEN MALOOF (*Melkite Priest*)

A TESTIMONY TO THE INTERIOR LIFE OF FATHER CHARBEL MAKHLOUF

MONK OF THE ORDER OF ST ANTHONY THE GREAT
OF THE MARONITE MONKS IN THE LEBANON

EHMEJ, the village where I was born, near the monastery and hermitage of Annaya, where Fr Charbel Makhlof once lived, is as it were a living biography of the religious life of the Servant of God. Perhaps it was the influence of this exemplary life which led me to enter the very Order of Fr Charbel.

Those of my fellow-countrymen who are over sixty years old knew Fr Charbel and visited him. My father, now sixty-five years old, used, at the age of thirteen, to serve Fr Charbel's Mass in his hermitage. It is therefore an oral tradition which I am putting together and presenting here, and it is moreover a tradition authentically confirmed by written testimonies, declared upon oath and signed.

Fr Charbel Makhlof joined to his life under the monastic rule the perfect model of the life of the Desert Fathers.

I—HIS LIFE IN THE MONASTERY

After his ordination Fr Charbel was ordered by his superiors to return to the monastery of Annaya where he had made his novitiate and taken the religious habit. It is there that he spent sixteen years among his brethren, before retiring to the hermitage of the monastery for twenty-nine years of ascetic life.

Already, while in the monastery, Fr Charbel was seeking with all his heart to unite himself to Christ. He made every effort to observe *strictly the monastic rule and the religious vows*. He was exceptional above all for his spirit of prayer, obedience and total abnegation.

Fearing that his spiritual fervour might lessen, he preferred to die rather than leave his monastery or live outside it. He loved nothing so much as to spend as much time as possible in the chapel, kneeling before the Blessed Sacrament, absorbed in meditation for long hours. His separation from the world was absolute. When he pronounced his religious vows in the monastery of St Maro at Annaya, his mother, Brijita, came to the monastery and asked to see him. Br Charbel excused himself and spoke to her a few words from inside the chapel without seeing her or being seen. She then said

to him : 'Is it thus, my son, that you deprive me of seeing you?' He replied : 'If God wills, we shall see each other in heaven for eternity'.

After his ordination to the priesthood, to a group of his relatives and friends who came to ask him to pay them a visit he replied : 'The religious who visits his relatives and fellow-countrymen after his profession will have to begin once more to become a monk'.

As the rule obliged the monks to rise at midnight, but granted them permission to go to bed again until the time of rising, Fr Charbel remained in the chapel, praying and meditating until morning. What is more, he was the last to leave the chapel, having attended all the Masses of his brethren, and so preparing himself at great length for his own. You would have to see him at the altar to understand with what a living faith the saints pray !

His devotion to the Blessed Virgin was such that not for one single day did he omit to say the entire rosary.

We can truly say that by his poverty Fr Charbel imitated the greatest of the saints. He really lived like the poorest of the poor, in spirit and in actual fact, in everything concerning his dress, his food and his cell. It was the poor and harsh habit which he chose for himself. But though frequently patched, his clothes were always clean : he washed them white himself. In the heart of winter, at 1400 metres altitude, he wore the same habit as in summer. Even the bitterly hungry would not eat the food which he himself willingly accepted. He reserved for himself the hard and burnt crusts and the worst fruit. As to meat, Fr Charbel never touched it during the whole of his religious life. When he spent whole days working in the vineyard, right in the season of the grape-harvest, he never allowed himself to touch one, unless it was to obey his superiors.

Fr Charbel wished never to receive or handle a coin.

Fr Joseph Abraham, who lived with him for two years, told me the following : A layman was to give a mass-stipend to Fr Charbel. When I presented it to him he refused to touch it himself, but I made it quite clear that the intention of the donor was that it should be given from hand to hand. The Father then stretched out his arm its full length, took the money and, keeping his arm out, went thus to give it to Fr Macarius, his companion at the hermitage, without even looking to see how much it was.

His purity was truly angelic. The efforts which he made to preserve this beautiful virtue surpassed human strength. Prolonged fastings, penances and disciplines, continual prayers and his union with God combined to make Fr Charbel an angel in human form.

With what vigilance did he watch over his senses! All those who knew him will declare that, through his whole life, he never looked at the face of man. Head and forehead were always covered with his hood, so that he could hardly see where he was going. When he received an order from his superior to visit a sick person, the women withdrew or even left the house when they heard of the arrival of 'the Hermit'. Everyone knew that he would not tolerate their presence.

You could not see the hermit without being drawn towards God and moved by his love.

His obedience was that of a little child towards his parents. It was that which marked him out from among his brethren. Seeing in his superiors the person of Christ, he carried out their orders with complete abandonment and joyousness. He was not content to obey only his superior: each of his brethren was in his eyes another Christ. As a result he obeyed him. He liked doing the humblest services in the house. No one ever saw him discontented. No one ever heard him murmur about the behaviour of either a superior or an inferior.

In his testimony upon Fr Charbel, Fr Néhmetallah Néhmé, then superior of the monastery of Annaya, cites, among others, the following occurrence:

Fr Charbel was working one day in the vineyard with the monks. Towards evening I went out to see them. On my arrival I found Fr Charbel working in a corner of the vineyard where his brethren could not see him. As I knew that he ate only when ordered to do so, I asked him: 'Father, have you broken your fast?'—'No', he said, 'no one has yet called me.'

As to this occurrence, none of the brethren has any doubt about it. He had fasted for thirty hours, for he ate but once a day. I then sent someone to the monastery to get him something to eat.

II—HIS LIFE IN THE HERMITAGE

But all this does not bring Fr Charbel's heroism to an end. His profound charity longed for a greater resemblance to Christ and the Holy Fathers of the Desert. The life of our

hermit is a testimony for our generation that the virtues of these great solitaries are not legendary.

He burned with the desire of obtaining permission to become a hermit. His superiors, considering that he already possessed all the religious virtues, granted this to him.

To become a hermit is, by definition, according to our rule, to belong totally to God, to die, not only to the world, but also to the consolation of living among one's brethren, and to push the practice of the religious virtues to their highest point of heroism.

For twenty-nine years, Fr Charbel imitated in his hermitage the life of St Anthony the Great and St Paul the first Hermit, whose life he liked to read. The difference is that Fr Charbel lived always subject to the orders of the superiors of the monastery at Annaya upon which the hermitage depended, and from which a brother brought him one meal only every day. This meal consisted only of vegetables, either raw or cooked simply in water. Occasionally the hermit seasoned them with a little oil. He spent almost all the night and day in prayer, meditation before the Blessed Sacrament, reading lives of the saints, and manual work. He bound himself rigorously to lose nothing of the merit of obedience. In short, during the whole of his hermit's life he was entirely submissive to his assistant who communicated to him the wishes of his superior, in such a way that he did nothing whatever except under obedience. He obeyed the least of his brethren as if he was his Father Superior.

Br Peter Jawade, who is still living, told me this :

'I was working in the monastery vineyard. Fr Charbel, when the oxen passed, held the loose branches to protect them. But an ox broke one and passed over it in spite of the Father's efforts. Fr Macarius became angry and said, addressing the hermit : 'There, it's your fault, what a catastrophe !' I then saw Fr Charbel, without saying a word, kneeling down, his arms crossed, and thus saying : 'Forgive me, for the love of Christ'.

Mortified in spirit, Fr Charbel was extremely mortified also in his body.

The same eye-witness told me the following :

'I myself entered the hermit's cell and saw his "bed". It was made of oak leaves covered with a palliasse. The pillow was merely a piece of wood rolled up in the end of a soutane. His prie-dieu in the chapel was a cluster of sticks which was covered in the same way by a piece of a soutane.'

The Interior Life of Father Charbel 151

After his death I had the good fortune to discover the hair shirt which Charbel wore day and night during his eremitical life. The parts of this relic which I have distributed have worked several cures.

III—HIS DEATH

Fr Charbel preserved heroically in the practice of all the acts of asceticism. In spite of his disciplines and dire privations, he remained quite well until 1898. On the 16th December of that year, Fr Charbel began his Mass after his customary five hours of preparation. Before the consecration, as it was very cold, he suddenly shivered. Fr Macarius his companion ; seeing that he could not continue, led him to lie down for a moment. It was only for a little while. The hermit went up to the altar again and resumed the Mass. At the Little Elevation he became ill once more, so badly that it was impossible to proceed. He held the Chalice and the Host raised up, and his eyes fixed on the Cross, and he remained thus as though like a statue. Fr Macarius managed, with much labour, to persuade him to leave the altar and go to his cell. He afterwards returned to complete the Mass. Charbel the hermit was stricken with paralysis. It was his first and his last illness.

For eight days, so long as he could move his lips and tongue, Charbel did not cease to repeat, with the names of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, the prayer of the Mass which he was forced to interrupt. *Abo dkouchto . . .* 'O Father of Justice, behold thy Son, immolated to please thee. Receive him, for it is because of me that he dies . . .' It was with these words that the Servant of God gave up his soul. Fr Macarius and Abbé Michel Abi-Ramia, a secular priest from Ehmei, assisted him in his last hour and gave him the Last Sacraments.

They could not avoid seeing in this last prayer of the hermit his wish to be immolated with Christ, to die in perfect union with his Saviour in the essential act of the representation of the Passion of Christ to share in the sacrificial and redeeming act of Christ, so as to live again with him eternally : Through death to Life !

In the minds of those people who saw him live and die, there is no doubt concerning his sanctity.

The miracles which he performed during his life, and those which he continues to work after his death, confirm the fact that God Himself is pleased to glorify his faithful servant.

PAUL DAHER,

Maronite Monk of the Order of St Anthony the Great, S.T.L. (Strasbourg).

THE INTERNATIONAL PATRISTIC CONFERENCE AT OXFORD

THE first International Conference of Patristic Studies, which met at Oxford from 24th to 28th September 1951, has proved a most successful and hopeful experiment. The attendance, some 270 scholars of very varied nationalities and religious allegiances, was much greater than had been anticipated, the quality of the various papers and communications was of the highest, and the organization admirable. The highest praise and greatest gratitude are due, and were heartily expressed both privately and publicly by those attending the Conference, to everyone concerned with the arrangements in Oxford, and especially to the Secretary, Dr F. L. Cross. The small international group of patristic scholars, including Dr Cross and Père Daniélou (whose inability to attend the conference was much regretted), who conceived and carried through the idea have every reason to be satisfied with their enterprise, and the announcement of a proposal to hold another similar conference in Oxford in some four years time was enthusiastically welcomed by all those present.

In trying to form some general impression of the Conference, perhaps the first thing that strikes the mind is the great extent and variety of the field of patristic studies as revealed by it and, consequently, of the sort of people who are concerned with the study of the Fathers. The proceedings made it abundantly clear that the Fathers are no longer, if they ever were, the exclusive preserve of ecclesiastical controversialists and traditionally minded theologians. Patristic studies appeared unmistakably as having as wide a range and as cardinal an importance for scholars in other fields as those classical studies with which Professor H. I. Marrou of the Sorbonne, in his brilliant inaugural address made it clear that they should be, and are increasingly being linked, as they were in the great age of Renaissance humanism. The ancient world of the Graeco-Latin culture to which the pagan writers and the Fathers alike belong was after all one world, with a single though various and developing culture, and the erection of the artificial barriers which have existed in the recent past between 'early' or 'classical' and 'late', or Christian and pagan can only result in a general diminution of understanding and a failure to realize the immense importance

which that whole ancient world and its transformation by Christianity has for us to-day. And within the field of patristic studies itself it was clear that there was something to interest every type of scholar and that the work of every type of scholar was needed. In the principal lectures, the accounts of various scholarly projects given under the head of *Instrumenta Studiorum*, and the great mass of 'Communications', Scriptural exegesis, theology, philosophy, the history of the liturgy and of church music, the biographical disciplines including hagiography and prosopography, Church history and institutions and the development of the Greek and Latin languages were all under consideration; and in each branch of study there were scholars who had something to say of interest and importance to those working on other branches, and often to classical scholars, medievalists and others whose work lies outside the field of patristic studies. And, though clergy of all denominations predominated, laymen and women were by no means absent and it was clear that interest in the Fathers was by no means confined to the ecclesiastically minded.

It would be impossible to give any sort of account of all the contributions of major importance to patristic studies which were laid before the conference. Of the principal lectures, Professor Marrou's opening address, entitled *Patristique et Humanisme*, already mentioned, presented his important argument with the utmost elegance and a brilliant wit. Fr F. M. M. Sagnard, O.P., of Saulchoir, speaking on *Gnosticism and Mysticism*, penetrated very deeply into the real nature of Gnosticism and made clear the reasons for its unholy attractiveness. Père Daniélou sent an admirable paper on the Patristic interpretation of Scripture, which was read in his absence by Père Mondésert. Professor Klauser of Bonn gave a most interesting and scholarly account of the origin of episcopal insignia from secular marks of distinction bestowed by the Emperors on the higher clergy; and Fr A. Grillmeier, S.J., of Frankfurt, delivered an eloquent commemorative oration to mark the fifteenth centenary of the Council of Chalcedon. This is by no means a complete list, but human capacity is limited; and it will be necessary to be even more arbitrarily selective in dealing with the short 'Communications', if only because they were delivered in five sections operating simultaneously and, though the timing arrangements worked excellently and passage from one section to another was made as easy as possible, it was

physically impossible to hear all that one would have liked to. An entirely arbitrary selection may, however, illustrate their range and variety of interest.

Dr Christine Mohrmann of Nijmegen, perhaps the greatest contemporary authority on Christian Latin, spoke on *Sacramentum dans les plus anciens textes chrétiens*; Dr Wellesz on the development of the Alleluia in Byzantine and Western chant; Professor Trypanis on the Akathistos Hymn, the main body of which he is inclined to date to a period not very long after the Council of Ephesus; Fr Balthasar Fischer on the use of the Psalms as prayers addressed to Christ in the patristic period; Professor G. Quispel on the content of the Gnostic texts recently discovered in Egypt, which seem likely to be of revolutionary importance for the study of Gnosticism; Dr Prestige on Apollinarius—as might be expected a most distinguished contribution. There was a group of important contributions on Augustinian subjects, and one of much philosophical and theological interest by Fr Hadot on *Actio*, *Actus* and *Energeia* in the language of Marius Victorinus Afer. But the list of important and interesting communications could be prolonged almost indefinitely; and their content was too various to permit any sort of general summing up or conclusion, except that already alluded to of the extent and richness of the field of patristic studies.

The Conference was not of course intended as, and it did not develop into, any sort of œcumenical meeting or forum for discussion of questions of faith or discipline between representatives of the different confessions. The common ground on which the participants met was that of scholarship, of devotion to the common task of finding out the truth about the Fathers and their world. But, perhaps for that very reason, it seemed to many of the members to do a very great deal for the promotion of better understanding between Christians. The general atmosphere of good understanding and goodwill and the absence, as a general rule, of any traces of denominational acrimony in the formal and informal discussions, were very noticeable. And it made clear what a very large foundation of agreed facts and conclusions, even on such sensitive points as the nature of Tradition (the subject of an excellent communication by Professor Bakhuizen van den Brink), already exists as a basis for future theological discussions. It may well be that in the present state of the movement towards Christian unity meetings of this kind, of scholars concerned with arriving at a true

understanding of the foundations of Christian faith and life, do more good than theological conferences at which confessional positions are deliberately and self-consciously considered. It cannot, at any rate, have done anything but good that so many Catholic scholars (and the Catholic representation, from England and Ireland as well as the Continent, was most satisfyingly large and by no means entirely clerical) should have lived and worked together for a week with Anglicans, Lutherans, Presbyterians, and Orthodox on a basis of personal friendship and common devotion to Christian scholarship. The fewness of the Orthodox who were able to attend was perhaps the only defect of the Conference; Fr Florovsky's absence (he had originally proposed to attend) was particularly regretted.

It will be impossible, even in this sketchy and inadequate account of the occasion, not to make some grateful reference to the entertainment and instruction provided for the members of the Conference by Fr Gervase Mathew in his fascinating illustrated account of *Recent Discoveries in Byzantine Archaeology* and Dr Wellesz and his Dominican choir with their renderings of Byzantine hymns and liturgical chants. And it must also be recorded that the Catholic members of the Conference, under the leadership of Fr Lopes, paid due, and on the occasion of a Patristic conference in Oxford most appropriate, homage to Newman by a pilgrimage to Trinity, Oriel, St Mary's, and Littlemore, where they were welcomed by the Vicar in Newman's own Church.

A. H. ARMSTRONG

(The publication of the proceedings of the Conference will be undertaken by the S.P.C.K. It may be possible with due permission of the publishers and the authors to print some of the papers in future issues.—THE EDITOR.)

NEWS AND COMMENTS

We welcome the letter of the Holy Father *Sempiternus Rex* in commemoration of the fifteenth centenary of the Council of Chalcedon. We will however consider its contents in a future issue.

We also greet the new representative of the Œcumenical Patriarch in London, Archbishop Athenagoras, metropolitan of Thyateira.

TWO NEW BYZANTINE CONVENTS

In last year's autumn issue, mention was made of the Byzantine rite group of nuns and oblates formed by Abbot Constantine at the 'Regina Pacis' Priory Schotenhof, Antwerp, in 1948 [vid. *E.C.Q.*, Autumn 1950, p. 433].

Another Byzantine centre of Benedictine nuns started in October 1949, at Cureglia, near Lugano, Switzerland, is in process of formation. Their activities are twofold. While they help Western Catholics to take an interest in the Byzantine rite and tradition they also endeavour to create an atmosphere in which Orthodox visitors can feel at home. They work in collaboration with the monks of Chevetogne.

Last year saw the first steps towards the foundation of a Russian Carmel.

At the present one of the Carmels in France is giving a temporary home to the four nuns who are beginning this venture. The superior has had eighteen years experience in a Slav community. Any Russian wishing to correspond with this Carmel should write care of the Editor of *E.C.Q.*

FORDHAM INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY RUSSIAN STUDIES

For twelve years Fordham University has arranged an Annual Conference of Eastern Rites and Liturgies, the University is now establishing an Institute of Contemporary Russian Studies.

The purpose is to foster an understanding of Russian culture and language. Under the heading Russian Culture are listed: religion, philosophy—including e.g., the philosophy of Marxism and the thoughts of Solovyov—literature, art, history, sociology, economics and national and international affairs. There is a staff of thirty-two.

Associated with this is a Russian centre with a Slav Byzantine chapel and a reading room open to the public. This centre is under the direction of Father Wilcock, s.j.

We wish this venture of faith, freedom and real peace all success.

METROPOLITAN ANDREW SZEPTICKY

Materials for an English biography of Metropolitan Szepticky should be collected now, while those who knew him are still with us.

The *E.C.Q.* has been asked to act as a reception-base for such material.

The editor will therefore be grateful if those who have letters or other matter from the late metropolitan will lend them and allow of their being published in whole or in part in the pages of the *E.C.Q.*, and later in a biography, should such a work be undertaken. In 1952 an issue of the *E.C.Q.* will be devoted to this subject. Here are some headings under which the many-sided work of Metropolitan Andrew can be examined:—

- (1) The problem of Catholic and Orthodox reunion.
- (2) The importance he attached to Byzantine culture, and to the Byzantine tradition generally, in relation to the formation of Catholics of the Byzantine Rite.
- (3) The importance of monasticism in reunion work with the Christian East.

The Irish Theological Quarterly, January, April 1951, Maynooth.

We rejoice to welcome the re-appearance of this excellent quarterly after so long an absence, and, to judge from these two numbers, Irish scholarship shows itself second to none. Mgr Kissane, the Rector of Maynooth, writes on Psalm 108, Dr Cremin on 'The Canon Law of the Church of England', while Dr Corcoran deals very ably with Sir Edmund Whitaker's 'Space and Spirit'. The review of de Lubac's 'Catholicism' is fair and balanced, but we do feel that Dr Mitchell fails to understand *Surnaturel*—in fact he seems to view it from the point of view of those theologians whom Père Garrigou-Lagrange in his 'Predestination' calls *rigidiores thomistae*, and both he and Dr Cornish tend to search for latent heresy in the Fathers and Doctors of the Church who acquired their title precisely through their unwavering orthodoxy. Be that as it may, the viewpoints which are opened up on these questions, whether we agree or not with the conclusions

reached and advanced, are of the very first importance, and will serve to stimulate the interest of theologians, professional and amateur. Dr Mitchell on St Columbanus is yet more interesting.

THE LAITY AND CHRISTIAN UNITY

A REPORT ON THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC ACTION, ROME, 12TH AND 13TH OCTOBER 1951

At this first Conference of its kind the afternoons were devoted to discussions in which delegates of different countries spoke of their own activities and difficulties. One of the most successful of these discussions was that on œcumenical work for the Union of Churches at the Palazza Salviati. P. Boyer, S.J., Prefect of the Gregorian University, presided. The atmosphere was one of great confidence and sympathy, and people of all nations conversed together. P. Congar, O.P., a leading theologian of œcumenism, spoke of the enormous interest in the towns of France in prayer for Christian Unity, and he distinguished this from the work for individual conversions: it is a question of working upon groups of people as such, getting to know them, respecting them, appreciating them, loving them, and removing centuries of prejudice. The means is the *dialogue* method, in which we have something to learn from our partner. A Ukrainian emphasized this need, and said that the Orthodox were complaining of always finding themselves faced with a *monologue* in which we are teaching them without a thought for the spiritual treasures which they already possess. The Dutch delegation was strongly pastoral. Fr Witte, S.J., made several concrete proposals: he regretted the absence of contacts between efforts made in different countries, and contacts with separated Christians, with whose real life, and not just their writings, should be known to us. An exchange of ideas on the theme of tolerance was wanted, and he suggested that the attitude of Catholics in Latin countries often created difficulties in Northern countries. Mlle Posnoff spoke for the Russians in emigration. Her work is to make known Orthodoxy among Latin Catholics: there is so much ignorance, in this matter, where there could be so much enthusiasm. Unjust judgments about the Orthodox hinder prospects of Reunion. This was also the opinion of Baroness de Hueck, whose work in Harlem has been described by Thomas Merton. The least gesture is appreciated if it pays homage to the dissidents' traditions:

the Egyptian delegate tells of a Dutch Bishop staying in the monasteries of the Wadi Natroun, and who, knowing a little of the Coptic Liturgy, 'let himself go', joining in with the monastic choir in his stentorian voice: the situation was reversed! His two companions, laymen, were asked to chant the Epistle and Gospel, and two separate communities vied with each other for the honour of entertaining the distinguished guest. Speaking for Germany, Dr Wagner instanced the book of Dr Lortz on Martin Luther as a powerful aid to a rapprochement with the Reformed Church. The book is critical indeed, but it does recognize the exceptional religious qualities of the reformer and the lawfulness of some of his requests. All this has made Protestants view the Petrine claims with greater sympathy. In Switzerland the liturgical movement and the greater simplicity of Church art has attracted Protestants and drawn them towards a devotion to Mary. Among the Rumanian, emigrants contact with the Church has made people admire her organization, but also made them wonder whether the external does not obscure the internal. The first thing we have to do for unity is to live fully our Catholic life, the second is to admire the workings of grace among our separated brethren. During the final discussion a priest-reporter interrupted with the objection that such readiness to acknowledge our responsibility and our faults was really doing more harm than good. Should we not rather exalt the Church when we are dealing with non-Catholics? But experience of œcumenical work undermines this objection. It is not by means of human persuasion that the Church will spread, but through loyalty, frankness, clarity and fraternal love. As a result of this Conference there will remain for the participants a stronger bond and link with Rome, her directives and encouragements. God has granted us a pledge of the grace of truth and charity, which are preparing for His Church a Unity ever more intense, vast and youthful.

DOM JEAN GRIBOMONT, ABBAZIA S. GIROLAMO,
Rome, 17th October 1951.

[We have curtailed somewhat in the above report. That this question was discussed at the International Congress of the Laity is of great value and encouragement.

THE EDITOR.]

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Father Charbel Makhlouf of Beqaakafrah, of the Order of Maronite Antonians, Monk and Hermit of the Monastery of Annaya. By Rev. Antony Chibley. Pp. 175. Text in Arabic with many illustrations. Lebanese Missionary Press, Juniah (Lebanon) 1950.

This book contains a short life of Father Charbel Makhlouf, who died in odour of sanctity in 1898, and whose tomb will soon be world famous for the numerous miraculous cures obtained through his intercession. This account is followed by the written testimonies of seventeen of his contemporaries witnessing to the holiness of his life. The second part of the book gives the description of thirty-four miraculous cures together with the written testimonies of doctors and other trustworthy persons. The whole is intended as part of the documentation which is being prepared by a committee appointed for this purpose by higher ecclesiastical authority with a view to Father Charbel's eventual beatification.

Short Biography of Father Charbel Makhlouf, Lebanese Monk. The fame of his Holy Life and of his Miracles in the Monastery, at the Hermitage and at his Tomb. By a Lebanese Monk. A pamphlet of 66 pp. in Arabic; fourth edition with illustrations. Beyrouth, Eagle Press, 1950.

After a brief account of Father Charbel's education and holy life, the author gives us some interesting details on his exhumation after twenty-five years, the preservation of his body and the extraordinary phenomenon of its oozing blood and water; on the miraculous appearance of his figure on a photographic film, and on the great number of pilgrims that flock daily to his tomb to obtain favours or cures through his intercession.
E.L.W.

St Augustine : Against the Academics. Translated and Annotated by John J. O'Meara. Pp. 213 (Ancient Christian Writers, No. 12, Newman Press, Westminster, Maryland) \$3.

This translation, with introduction and commentary, of the *Contra Academicos* is perhaps the most interesting addition so far to the St Augustine volumes in the *Ancient Christian Writers* series. (So far only comparatively slight and early works have been published, but a translation of the *De Trinitate* is announced, and it is to be hoped will not be too

long delayed.) Professor O'Meara has done his work excellently; and perhaps the reviewer may be allowed to express his special pleasure at this first public appearance (except for an article in *Dominican Studies* III, 1950) of an Irish Catholic layman and a Professor of the National University in the ranks of English-speaking patristic scholars: a vigorous and healthy growth of patristic studies in Ireland might do more than almost anything else to lessen the distance between the Irish Catholic outlook and tradition and that of intelligent Catholics elsewhere, which sometimes presents such serious problems to us in England.

The *Contra Academicos* is not one of St Augustine's major works. Professor O'Meara's judgment on it in his introduction (p. 18) seems sound. 'The *Contra Academicos* cannot be recommended as a valuable contribution to the theory of knowledge, or even as an answer to scepticism. It is a personal work, written by Augustine to meet his own needs, and addressed to a friend of his'. It may be worth saying in passing that, though the theology and incidental philosophy of the Fathers is of course the foundation of all later Christian theology and philosophy of any value, their apologetic is not, generally speaking, worth very much, or of more than merely historical interest. But though the value of the present treatise in itself is relatively slight it provides very interesting evidence about St Augustine's attitude to Neo-Platonism at the time of his conversion (shortly after which the dialogue was written) and the influence on him of the Neo-Platonist philosophers. Professor O'Meara deals with these questions in a very thorough and scholarly way in his commentary.

He brings strong confirmatory evidence to support the now fairly generally accepted view that St Augustine's conversion in 386 was a genuine conversion to Christianity and not, as Alfarić and others before him maintained, a conversion to Neo-Platonism more or less slightly tinged with Christianity (there is a good summary account of the literature of this controversy in the Introduction, pp. 19-21). With the other controversial question which arises in the study of the *Contra Academicos*, whether Plotinus or his disciple Porphyry was the Platonist who most influenced the mind of St Augustine, Professor O'Meara deals very fully (especially in n. 61 to Book III, pp. 193-97) and in a most balanced way: his conclusion, however, that Porphyry rather than Plotinus was the predominant influence (he does not of course deny that Augustine knew the *Enneads* and was influenced by his

reading of them) does not seem to me entirely satisfactory. The exclusive mention of Porphyry in the controversial passage *De Civitate Dei* X, 24-32, which is his most solid piece of evidence, can easily be explained by the consideration that, when Augustine is arguing against the errors of the Neo-Platonists it would be natural for him to bring the great anti-Christian controversialist Porphyry to the fore and not to mention Plotinus, who had never explicitly attacked or rejected Christianity in his published works. And the fact that when in the *Confessions* (IX, 10), he comes to describe the supreme spiritual experience of his life, the conversation with St Monica at Ostia and the intellectual vision in which it culminated, he does so, as Fr Paul Henry has shown,¹ in language taken from Plotinus, though given a fully Christian meaning, is very strong evidence on the other side. The question, however, is not one of major importance, as the philosophy of the devoted disciple Porphyry is in all essentials that of his master Plotinus: and on the main question of the relationship of Christianity and Neo-Platonism in the early stages of St Augustine's thinking as a Christian, Professor O'Meara is entirely sound and satisfying.

A. H. ARMSTRONG

John Cassian. A study in Primitive Monasticism by Owen Chadwick. Pp. xi, 213 (Cambridge University Press) 15s.

It is very remarkable that this should be the first serious study of Cassian and his work to appear in English. Considering the capital importance of his work in the history of monasticism and its influence on the Rule of St Benedict, one would have expected that he would have found many a biographer and critic before now. This, however, only makes the present study more welcome, and Mr Chadwick is to be congratulated on the thorough, scholarly character of his book. Cassian's work is studied, not only in connection with monasticism, but also in the controversy about grace, and it is set in relation to the leading movements of thought of his time. Mr Chadwick seems to have read everything of importance relating to his subject—one may note in particular the bibliography of works on Evagrius, whose importance has only lately come to be realized but he writes with

¹ In his *La Vision d'Ostie* (Vrin, 1938), the best starting point for a study of Christianity and Neo-Platonism in the thought of St Augustine, and a book of great depth and beauty.

a lightness of touch, which should make this an admirable introduction to the subject for the ordinary reader.

Unfortunately, however, the book is marred throughout by an extraordinary harshness of judgment. Many delicate issues are raised in regard to monastic life and prayer and in regard to the doctrine of grace. But Mr Chadwick seems to have no sense of what Cassian himself would call 'discretion'. The most complicated questions are solved by a summary judgment which lacks all subtlety and often seems to betray a complete lack of understanding. For instance, he seems to regard the solitary life of contemplation as a pure illusion. Cassian, he tells us, regarded the community life as sufficient for himself, but 'he was suffering from an illusion which historical experience or a more independent mind might have dispelled . . . He supposed that more fervent Gauls, emulating the Egyptian abbots whom they admired, might pass into *the fancied sublimity of the anchoritic contemplation of God*' (pp. 51-2, italics mine). He then goes on to show, as he thinks, that Cassian's own argument 'implies that the imaginary picture of the contemplative engaged upon unceasing prayer in the desert is illusory' (p. 52). Finally in a later chapter he tells us that while 'Cassian had maintained the solitary life as a development beyond cenobitism, Benedict, who had suffered the rigours of an Italian hermitage, deliberately rejected it . . .' (p. 175). The fact is, of course, that St Benedict follows Cassian precisely in allowing for the solitary life as a state of perfection beyond the normal monastic life.

This is but one example of the crudity and inaccuracy of Mr Chadwick's thought. Another example is to be found in his treatment of asceticism. Here again there is matter for careful discernment, and exaggerations and distortions of the ascetic ideal are to be found in the monks of the desert. But Mr Chadwick dismisses the whole ascetic ideal in one sentence: 'St Paul and St John, Hermas or even Irenæus', he tells us, 'could not conceive the Christian life in terms of progress towards a goal because they believed the goal had already through God's acts been reached. The kingdom had come: the eschatological event, though its consummation was in the future, was also a present fact' (pp. 77-8). This attempt to set the ascetic ideal of monasticism against the Gospel teaching surely requires no refutation. To recognize that the kingdom of God has already come by the establishment of the order of grace does not compel us to deny that there can be a progress towards a goal in the life of grace—to

what Mr Chadwick himself calls the 'consummation'—and that asceticism may be a means to this end. It would be tedious to enumerate all the examples of this crudity and misunderstanding. The simple fact is that, beneath all the display of modern learning and scholarship, Mr Chadwick retains the old Protestant misconception of the very nature of ascetical and contemplative life, which makes it impossible for him to begin to understand the thought of a man like Cassian.

One last example, however, must be given, as it illustrates better than anything his failure to enter into the mind of Cassian. In his chapter on the life of contemplation he informs us that 'all Christian contemplation must be judged by one standard—whether the soul is attempting to contemplate God without mediation or whether it contemplates God by means of His self-revelation in the life of Jesus Christ' (pp. 148–9). He then goes on to say that 'it is not at first sight easy to decide into which of the two categories his (Cassian's) contemplation falls'. The question of the relation between meditation on the life of Christ and the pure prayer of contemplation is one of great interest and importance, but to set the two methods of prayer in opposition, and to suggest that in Cassian there is any question of a prayer which is in no sense mediated through the self-revelation of God in Christ is, as Mr Chadwick himself shows, by the evidence he afterwards introduces, to misunderstand the matter altogether. It is this failure to grasp the nature of the problem which he is studying that makes his criticism of Cassian so unsatisfactory. In other respects, as has been said, this is a valuable work, and it brings together the facts concerning Cassian's life and thought in a way which has never been tried before. But, for an adequate study of Cassian's teaching on prayer and the monastic life, we must wait for a work of greater depth and discernment.

DOM BEDE GRIFFITHS

Bible et Liturgie by Jean Daniélou, s.j., *Lex Orandi*, Les Editions du Cerf, 1951.

In his Introduction Père Daniélou quotes the scholastic adage on the sacraments, *significando causant*, and then tells us that our modern manuals of dogma insist almost exclusively on the second term of the definition. They neglect the *significando*. His object in this book is to treat of the significance

of the sacramental rites. At one time these rites played an important part in the instruction of the faithful : can we say the same of to-day ? If anything these rites are meaningless to a number of people, and can even be a cause of derision or scandal. How far we have travelled from the Itinerary of Etheria ! Now, the Mysteries of Christ are our Mysteries—that was the teaching of Dom Marmion, which, in spite of its apparent novelty, has come to assume its rightful place in modern theology and spirituality. And the startling assertions of Dom Casel in his *Kultmysterium* that the Mysteries of Christian worship are not just a *nuda commemoratio* but a living re-enactment of the Redemption, though many scholars will make their reservations, have nevertheless had a positive influence on modern thought. Père Daniélou specializes in symbolism and typology. The events and personages of the Old Testament are figures of those of the New. This is a fundamental principle of Biblical theology, and we must add that the typology par excellence is that known as eschatological. The *novissima tempora* of which Holy Scripture speaks does not end with our Lord's earthly life, but continues in His Church, and it is for this reason that we can trace a sacramental typology. Already we see in the Gospel of St John the manna as a type of the Eucharist, in the first Epistle to the Corinthians the crossing of the Red Sea a type of Baptism, as is also the flood in the first Epistle of St Peter.

We should not seek the origin of the Sacraments in the early Hellenistic world, but in the Jewish liturgy. Baptism, as we commonly understand it, is performed with water because water cleans and purifies. But that is not the most important meaning of the rite. Holy Scripture speaks of a water which destroys, a water of judgment—a symbol of the power of death ; but also of a water which creates and gives life. That is what the rite of washing meant to the Jews. The choice of bread and wine in the Eucharist is an allusion to the sacrifice of Melchisedech, the form of the meal is an allusion to the sacred banquets of the Jews. Paschaltide is an allusion to the Passover supper and a symbol of the alliance of the people and God. It is true, other symbols, derived from the Hellenistic environment of the early Christians, have found their way into the sacramental system : the *sphragis*, or imposition of the sign of the cross, originally connected with Jewish circumcision, was afterwards interpreted on the analogy of pagan symbolism. The dove, a

symbol of the Holy Spirit brooding over the waters, was taken as a symbol of peace.

It is not the personal theology of the Fathers which we are endeavouring to recapture, but their evidence as guardians of the Christian tradition. We may think that their Biblical theology has been warped by their contact with paganism: but the fact that the Good Shepherd of the baptisteries should be made to look like Orpheus does not prevent Him from being the same Person who was foretold by Ezechiel and whom John shows to be embodied in Christ.

Père Daniélou deals not only with the Sacraments of Baptism (and the *sphragis*), Confirmation and the Holy Eucharist, with their types and figures, but also with Psalm 22, the Canticle of Canticles, Feasts and Festivals, the mystery of the Sabbath, Sunday, the Eighth Day, Easter, Ascension, Pentecost, and Tabernacles. Some of his material is found elsewhere in his writings, but the context is always fresh.

DOM GREGORY REES

Sermons et Opuscules Spirituels Inédits, Tome I, by Richard de St Victor; text, Introduction and Notes by Jean Chatillon and W.-J. Tulloch; Trans. Joseph Barthélemy, *Bibl. de Spir. Médiévale*, Desclée de Brouwer, 1951.

Tome I of the hitherto unpublished works of Richard contains *L'Edit d'Alexandre ou Les Trois Processions*, a mystical writing with a decidedly liturgical flavour, framework and origin. Those of us who were brought up on Dom Wilmart, with his curious but understandable antipathy towards what he considered a break with patristic spirituality, will view with interest the more critical and yet more sympathetic examination of the Victorines and the Cistercian mystics which are now under way. Dom Déchanet was daring in his treatment of William of St Thierry, but he was undeniably right. The editors of Richard of St Victor are in the same school as Dom Déchanet. The spiritual authors of the period in question may indeed have stood at the turning point of medieval mysticism, they may have been partly responsible for a change in outlook, or perhaps we should say a change towards 'inlook', but if so their responsibility was not intentional, for they themselves belonged to former ways of thought and prayer, and not to what followed. In fact the whole trend of the twelfth century Church, as instanced especially in the movements among the religious orders, was towards a former way of life of which they had been robbed.

The three processions of the Purification, Palm Sunday and the Ascension signify the three stages of the spiritual life. The biblical and liturgical terminology employed is far-reaching: take the word 'procession' in the first place. It is a journey, a pilgrimage, a collective movement from the profane to the sacred, it is a common prayer. These three processions bring before us once more the great events in the history of the people of God, the passage through the Red Sea, the crossing of the Desert, the pilgrimages of the sons of Israel up to the Temple in Jerusalem, and above all the joyful, sorrowful, and glorious mysteries of the life of Christ. A most interesting division of spiritual persons is given: *speculativi*, *contemplativi*, and *prophetae*.

R.G.R.

An Outline Guide to the Study of Eastern Christendom by Henry R. T. Brandreth, O.G.S. (S.P.C.K.) 1s. 3d.

The appearance of this most helpful pamphlet bibliography is greatly to be welcomed in these days when only muffled sounds are heard in England of the remorseless religious war that is being waged in the East. The supine ignorance of we English Christians concerning the affairs of our Eastern brethren is a matter for burning shame. It is hard to believe, however, that a reading of this outline guide can fail to stir a curiosity, even in those most indifferent to Eastern Christendom. The guide, by the skill of its arrangement, its range, scope and annotations, itself provides a valuable key to the Eastern Churches.

The numbering of all entries and the inclusion of an index of names would be of value for reference purposes. A check of bibliographical particulars has revealed only a few minor errors, but perhaps details of publisher, price and date, all three, should be given in all cases. However, there should be no trouble in tracing any item from the particulars given.

It is surprising to find Janko Lavrin's study of Dostoevsky preferred to that by E. H. Carr, so much superior, and having the added advantage of being still in print. An out of print edition of *The Life of the Archpriest Avvakum by Himself* is listed, but it is not mentioned that a recent translation of this work is included in Fedotov's *Treasury of Russian Spirituality*, also listed. Prof. S. L. Frank's *Soloviev Anthology* is not mentioned, and Gervase Matthew's Faber Gallery book on *Byzantine Painting* is omitted from the section on Iconography.

However, the choice of books is most nicely calculated to hold the interest of the 'inquiring Anglican priest and layman' for whom it has been made, and Catholics too will be grateful to the compiler for his 'pathfinder' labours.

JOHN BATE

The Life of Baron von Hügel by Michael de la Bedoyère. Pp. xviii, 366 (Dent) 25s.

Dr Karl Adam, in his very fine book, *The Spirit of Catholicism*, shows feelingly the difficulties and trials that may await the Catholic thinker and scholar in trying to harmonize the fruit of his studies with authoritative Catholic doctrine. A balance needs to be maintained between the Church's teaching authority and the rights of the individual scholar: excess on either side has obvious dangers. Too much domination by authority makes vigorous intellectual life impossible; too much liberty would endanger faith and lead to chaos. Nor can any hard-and-fast line of demarcation be laid down, for circumstances change and new problems of science and criticism continually arise. Each side has the duty of claiming its due, and may claim more than its due; hence tension at times is inevitable, but as the subject of this book taught insistently, tension and suffering are the only way to progress. As Karl Adam says: 'the scholar suffers from the conflict of his ideals, when the service of truth seems to be at variance with his loyalty to the Church. It is a sacred suffering, yet a very real one. He is nailed to the "cross of his ideals", and no man can take him down from this cross.'

These words might have been written of Friedrich von Hügel, for he was an outstanding example in modern times of a great Catholic savant who retained at the same time marked independence of mind. He lamented a certain narrowness—the 'siege-mentality' others have called it—that he believed had crept by force of circumstances into the post-Reformation Church, and fought all through his adult life for freedom of expression in philosophical, critical and historical matters. A full and well-informed biography of such a man is a real event in Catholic letters. Count de la Bedoyère, to whom the work was entrusted, has bided his time for understandable reasons—von Hügel died in 1925 and next year will see his birth centenary—and has now accomplished it extremely well and ably. He gives a well-proportioned view of the Baron's whole career, showing

him *en famille*, in his other personal relationships and in all his varied activities, intellectual, social and spiritual, wisely allotting by far the longest of the three parts of the book to the twenty years, 1894-1914, which saw the rise and fall of the Modernist Movement. His clear and objective account of this very thorny period explains the part von Hügel played in the Movement, his attitude and motives. It is shown that though, under pressure of circumstances all of which need to be taken into account, he sometimes entertained unsound opinions, his good faith was always transparent and his loyalty to the Church, though seeming overcast at times, survived triumphantly through every stress and strain. It survived, because ultimately von Hügel sought God alone, and knew how to detach himself from all inferior motives. 'A quiet, genial death to self' was not only a characteristic expression, it was a thing he consistently practised. He might have made his own the words of the great Eckhart, who declared before the Inquisition that he was 'capable of error, but not of heresy, because the one depends on the understanding, the other on the will'.

Von Hügel's quite exceptional position in regard to non-Catholics gives him a special claim to the attention of readers of this Review. It is commonly said that his influence has been greater outside the Church than in it, and certainly he was unique in the measure of regard given him by the most varied kinds of non-Catholics. He had no warmer admirers than the Anglican, Bishop Talbot of Winchester, the Swedish Lutheran, Archbishop Söderblom, or the Jewish philanthropist Claude Montefiore, while the esteem of many who stood outside the ranks of organized religion was no less genuine. His rare combination of qualities of heart and head: strength and gentleness, firm conviction and impartiality, zeal and discrimination, learning and charity—one could enlarge the list considerably—won him the confidence of truth and lovers in every denomination and outside them. All knew him as one who would follow the truth wherever it led him: had he always retained the favour of the ecclesiastical authorities this fact would not have been so striking.

He was able to make contact with non-Catholics in many ways. As a prominent member first of the Synthetic Society and then of the London Society for the Study of Religion he exercised a strong influence on leading English thinkers. As his reputation grew, he was often invited to address

informal gatherings of Anglican clerics, groups of University students and others, and there is no doubt that besides the other advantages he did much in this way to break down prejudice against the Church. The alienation of so many modern minds from all institutional religion, resulting in what Mr Christopher Dawson has called the loss of connection between religion and culture, grieved the Baron profoundly, and he strove valiantly to do what he could in the cause of spiritual reintegration. Perhaps, as knowledge of his teaching grows, he may do even more in time to come.

Count de la Bedoyère has relied as far as possible on unpublished material in writing this book, and his approach to the subject is also largely new. He has concentrated mainly on the man himself, and hence this work will not by any means supersede the admirable study of the Baron's thought by the Abbè Maurice Nédoncelle. The two books might be read with great profit together. Nédoncelle, too, gives an exhaustive bibliography, a feature altogether lacking in this *Life* owing to restrictions of space.

DOM MICHAEL HANBURY

The True Likeness by R. W. Hynek. Pp. 96 with plates (Sheed and Wård, 1951) 16s.

Since the Holy Shroud was first photographed in 1898, it has been the subject of increasing interest and study. It was again photographed in 1931 by a professional photographer, Giuseppe Enrie, on two different plates which he later published in a book called *La Sta Sindone rivelata della Fotografia*, and which suggested a new basis upon which research could work. The value of Dr Hynek's present careful study is that it summarizes the conclusions of other specialists, notably Prof. Vignon, and Doctors Barbet and Judica-Cordiglia among others. What emerges with extraordinary clearness is that, the more expertly science examines the Shroud, with every advantage of the latest photographic technique and medical and chemical knowledge, the more is its authenticity established and the details of the Gospel narrative corroborated.

'It is the internal evidence—the marks and signs discernible in the object—which is final.' The accumulation of evidence is most imposing as briefly set down in what Dr Hynek calls: Specific Medical Findings. Elsewhere he quotes Prof. Gedda of the Medical Faculty of Rome as saying: 'All internal evidence points to the authenticity of this extraordinary

relic: and it does so by its direct and faithful representation of the events of the Passion. In the last thirty-three years great progress has been made in our ability to assess this evidence. Historical proof—the chief arguments of our opponents—is to-day unimportant where the Shroud is concerned, for the Shroud itself is the best defender of its own authenticity.' The importance of the Shroud to iconography need hardly be stressed, confirming as it does the traditional Likeness of Christ. It was placed by the Empress Pulcheria in the Blachennar Church in Constantinople in the fifth century, and is mentioned as part of the booty parcelled out, when Constantinople fell to the Crusaders in 1204.

Prof. Vignon, one of the most eminent authorities on the subject, maintains in his *Le Saint Suaire de Turin* that the Shroud is the prototype of the Byzantine eikons.

This monograph is a testimony of anatomy in favour of the authenticity of the Holy Shroud; it is besides a most moving meditation on the Passion, though by no means *ex professo*.

Dr Hynek concludes by saying that, from 'the evidence brought forward in this book, there can be adduced, in the opinion of the author, the strongest of cases for the authenticity of the Holy Shroud'. A plea for rehabilitation which he put forward in a lecture to the Third International Congress of Catholic Doctors in Lisbon (1947) was accepted by the assembly, and a similar verdict given by the International Sindonological Congress in Rome in 1950.

The book contains a number of valuable plates.

D.TH.

The Letters of St Athanasius concerning the Holy Spirit. Trans., Introd., Notes by C. R. B. Shapland. (Epworth Press, 1951)

At last there is a good English translation of the Letters to Serapion of Thmuis. In the preface the *Source Chrétienne*s translation by Jules Lebon is mentioned, and on a number of points the two translators seem to agree, though not on all. There are passages and phrases here done into a rather unnatural English, as, for instance, 'Your Sacred Kindness's Letter', 'all things originate were not and have come into being'. On page 110 the words *χαρακτήρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ* from the Epistle to the Hebrews is rendered as 'the image of his *essence*', which, in spite of the number of Scripture

versions which read it thus, is a quite impossible interpretation. Otherwise we have few faults to look for, but rather would commend this attempt to open up the treasures of Athanasian doctrine to the ordinary man. Dr Prestige will be pleased at the use of *Triad*, instead of the more common *Trinity*. The notes are well-arranged and show a painstaking accuracy of judgement.

R.G.R.

BOOKS RECEIVED

- Les Editions Du Cerf : *Homélies sur les Nombres*, Origène ;
Les Stromates, Clement D'Alexandrie.
 Suvarna Bharathi Press, Travancore : *The Malabar Church
 and Other Orthodox Churches*, Fr I. Daniel, D.D.
 Blackfriars Publications : *Revolution in a City Parish*, Abbé
 G. Michonneau.
 Thames and Hudson : *The Lives of the Saints*, Omer Englebert.

REVIEWS

- From time to time we give our full list of exchanges.
Sobornost : The Fellowship of St Alban and St Sergius, London.
The Christian East : The Faith Press, London.
Theology : S.P.C.K., London.
Reunion : Baxter Press, Oxford.
The Pilot : S.P.C.U., London.
Scottish Journal of Theology : Edinburgh.
The Irish Theological Quarterly : St Patrick's College, Maynooth.
The Eastern Quarterly : London.
The Slavonic and Eastern European Review : University of London.
The Œcumenical Review : World Council of Churches, Geneva.
Theological Studies : Woodstock, M.D., U.S.A.
Unitas : The Graymoor Press, Peekskill, N.Y.
Orate Frates : St John's Abbey Collegeville, Min.
The Third Hour : New York.
The Ark : Stamford, Conn., U.S.A.
Journal of Arts and Letters : Brothers of the Christian Schools,
 Min., U.S.A.
Armenian Affairs : New York.
The Catholic Historical Review : Washington, D.C.
Etudes : Paris.

- Revue des Sciences Religieuses* : Strasbourg.
Russie et Chrétienté : Vers L'Unité Chrétienne : 'Istina', Boulogne-sur-Seine.
Dieu Vivant : Paris.
La Nation Roumaine : Paris.
Unirea : Cleveland, Ohio, U.S.A.
Eglise Vivante : S.A.M., Louvain.
Oriente : Madrid.
Irenikon : Chevetogne, Belgium.
Catholica Unio : Freiburg, Switzerland.
Byzantinoslavica : Prague.
Bijdragen : Maastricht.
Internationale Kirchliche Zeitschrift : Bern.
Bollettino : Grottaferrata.
Orientalia Christiana Periodica : Oriental Institute, Rome.
Analecta (O.S.B.M.) : Rome.
The Star of the East : Travancore, S. India.
Al-Macarrat : Harissa, Lebanon.
Le Lien : Cairo, Egypt.
ΠΑΝΤΑΙΝΟΣ : Alexandria, Egypt.
Témoignages : Abbaye de La Pierre-Qui-Vire, France.

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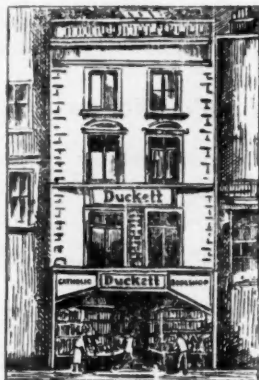
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By R. W. Hynek

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Dr Hynek, a leading Czech scientist, here discusses the scientific and medical reasons for thinking that the Holy Shroud of Turin, is the same Shroud that was for years in Constantinople, and is indeed the shroud of Christ. The evidence is fascinating, and documented at every point with photographs so that the lay reader can follow the argument. The result is, incidentally, a most moving study of the Passion.

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